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IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with strikethrough. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A polling method performed by a processor for conducting a poll on a respondent group including at least one or more first respondents and second respondents, the polling method comprising:

a first questioning by presenting an input form with a question to a first respondent;

obtaining a free reply by accepting input onto the input form by a first respondent of an unguided reply to said question;

a first storing for storing the free reply input by the first respondent as a reply option to said question;

closing the input form presented to the first respondent;

a second questioning by presenting an input form with of presenting said question and the stored free reply to a second respondent after storing the input free reply input of the free reply by the first respondent; and

accepting a choice of the stored free reply as a reply to said question on the input form presented to the second respondent

a presenting to the second respondent the reply option stored in said first storing.

2.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 1, further comprising:

obtaining an elective reply by accepting from a second respondent selection of a reply presented in said presenting to the second, respondent

a second storing of storing an elective input by the second respondent; and

compiling by repeating said first questioning, said obtaining the free reply, said first storing, said second questioning, said presenting, said obtaining an elective reply, and said second storing, and collecting and compiling elective replies and free replies from said respondent group.

3.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 1, further

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comprising a first determining to determine whether a free reply input by a first respondent and a predetermined reply option presented are substantially the same, said presenting further presenting at least one predetermined reply option.

4.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 3, wherein said first storing stores said free reply as a reply option to said question, upon said first determining having determined that said free reply input by said first respondent and said predetermined reply option are not substantially the same.

5.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 3, wherein:
upon said first determining having determined that said free reply input by said first respondent is substantially the same as said predetermined reply, said compiling compiles said free reply as an elective reply made by selection of said predetermined reply.

6.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 3, further comprising confirming, upon said first determining having determined that said free reply input by said first respondent and said predetermined reply option are substantially the same, accepting from said first respondent confirmation as to whether or not the determination is correct; wherein
said compiling is carried out if said determination is confirmed to be correct.

7.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to any of claims 1, 2, 4, 5 or 6, further comprising conditions-setting by accepting settings on conditions for designating at least one or more first respondents; wherein:
in said first questioning, said question is presented to one or more first respondents who have been extracted based on said conditions.

8.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to any of claims 2, 4, 5, or 6, further comprising:
a second determining of increasing a count of reply options to said question when a free reply is stored in said first storing, and determining whether the count of reply has reached a predetermined maximum value;
a third storing of storing correlatively with said question options that said presenting has presented to second respondents; and

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a re-surveying of, upon said second determining having determined that said reply options count has reached said maximum value, extracting based on data stored in said third storing second respondents who have made elective replies from options numbering a count that is a predetermined minimum value or less, and presenting said extracted second respondents with said question.

9.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to either claim 1 or claim 2, further comprising:

by repeating said first questioning, said obtaining a free reply and said first storing; and

controlling which said iterating terminated, and said presenting and said second questioning are performed.

10.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A polling device for conducting a poll on a respondent group including at least one or more first respondents and second respondents, the polling device comprising:

first question means for presenting an input form with a question to a first respondent;

free reply means for obtaining a free reply by accepting input onto the input form by a first respondent of an unguided reply to said question;

first storage means for storing the free reply input by the first respondent as a reply option to said question;

closing means for closing the input form presented to the first respondent;

second question means for presenting an input form with of presenting said question and the stored free reply to a second respondent after storing the input free reply input of the free reply by the first respondent; and

accepting means for accepting a choice of the stored free reply as a reply to said question on the input form presented to the second respondent

presentation means for presenting to the second respondent the reply option stored by said first storage means.

11.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A polling computer product for conducting a poll on a respondent group including at least one or more first respondents and second respondents, the computer product for causing a computer to function as:

first question means for presenting an input form with a question to a first respondent;

free reply means for obtaining a free reply by accepting input onto the input form by a first

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respondent of an unguided reply to said question;

first storage means for storing the free reply input by the first respondent as a reply
option to said question;

closing means for closing the input form presented to the first respondent;

second question means for presenting an input form with of-presenting said question and
the stored free reply to a second respondent after storing the input free reply-input of the free
reply by the first respondent; and

accepting means for accepting a choice of the stored free reply as a reply to said
question on the input form presented to the second respondent

presentation means for presenting to the second respondent the reply option stored by
said first storage means.

12.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable recording medium on which is
recorded a polling program for conducting a poll on a respondent group including at least one or
more first respondents and second respondents, the computer-readable recording medium on
which is recorded a polling program for causing a computer to function as:

first question means for presenting an input form with a question to a first respondent;

free reply means for obtaining a free reply by accepting input onto the input form by a first
respondent of an unguided reply to said question;

first storage means for storing the free reply input by the first respondent as a reply
option to said question;

closing means for closing the input form presented to the first respondent;

second question means for presenting an input form with of-presenting said question and
the stored free reply to a second respondent after storing the input free reply-input of the free
reply by the first respondent; and

accepting means for accepting a choice of the stored free reply as a reply to said
question on the input form presented to the second respondent

presentation means for presenting to the second respondent the reply option stored by
said first storage means.

13.   (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A polling method performed by a processor
comprising:

displaying a question;

displaying at least one or more predetermined reply options to the

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displayed question, and accepting selection of any of the predetermined reply options, or input of an unguided reply to the question <u>on an input form</u>;

determining whether a free reply <u>is</u> being entered;

determining, upon a free reply being entered, whether the free reply being entered and any of the predetermined reply options will be substantially the same before the input of the free reply has finished; ~~and~~

supporting, upon said determining having determined that the free reply and a predetermined reply option will be substantially the same, supporting input of the free reply or selection of the predetermined reply option<u>; and</u>

<u>closing the input form</u>.

14.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 2, further comprising a first determining of determining whether a free reply input by a first respondent and a predetermined reply option presented in said presenting are substantially the same, wherein said presenting further representing at least one predetermined reply option.

15.   (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A polling method according to claim 5, further

comprising confirming of, if said first determining determines that said free reply input by said first respondent and said predetermined reply option are substantially the same, accepting from said first respondent confirmation as to whether the determination is correct; wherein

said compiling is carried out if said determination is confirmed to be correct.

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